

VII.—*Lacock Abbey, Wilts.* By HAROLD BRAKSPEAR, Esq.

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Read 30th November, 1899.

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THE village of Lacock is about three miles south of Chippenham, near the river Avon, and formed part of the extensive possessions of the first Norman Earl of Salisbury, whose heiress, Ela, was married to William Longespee, natural son of Henry II., who in her right became possessed of all the titles and possessions of her wealthy house.

There was a *Book of Lacock* destroyed in the fire that so injured the collection of Sir Robert Cotton in 1731,<sup>a</sup> which doubtless contained much of interest. Fortunately some extracts had previously been taken and are printed in the *Monasticon* and elsewhere, from which we learn with reference to the foundation of the Abbey that

Ela vero uxor ejus vii annis supervixit in viduitate, et proposuit autem sepius ut fundaret monasteria Deo placentia, pro salute animæ suæ et mariti sui et omnium antecessorum suorum: quæ per revelationes habuit ut in prato testudinum, Anglice *Snaylesmede*, prope Lacock monasterium ædificaret in honorem Sanctæ Mariæ Sanctique Bernardi, et usque ad finem complevit sumptibus suis propriis, id est de Comitatu Sarum quod fuit hæreditas sua. Fundavit etiam Prioratum de Henton ordinum Cartusiæ; una die duo Monasteria fundavit, primo mane xvi kal. maij a<sup>o</sup> m cc. xxx. ii. apud Lacock, in quo sanctæ degent Canonissæ continuo Deo famulantes et devotissimè; et Henton, post nonam; a<sup>o</sup> vero ætatis suæ xlv. [Alicia Garinges apud Lacok prima Canonissa velata.] A<sup>o</sup> vii post foundationem domus de Lacock,

<sup>a</sup> MS. Vitellius A. VIII. ff. 129, etc. From such portions as can still be deciphered it appears that the transcripts made before the fire are fairly reliable.

hoc est a<sup>o</sup> D<sup>ni</sup> m.cc.xxx.viii., Domina Ela Lungespee, nobilis matrona, assumpsit habitum religionis apud Lacock, a<sup>o</sup> ætatis suæ li. [viii. kal. Januarii, in suis et actibus et præpositis, omnibus perpetratis secundum consilium et auxilium S. Edmundi Cantuar. Archiepiscopi, et aliorum virorum discretorum semper seipsam indulgens] A<sup>o</sup> D<sup>ni</sup> m.cc.xl. xviii. kal. Septemb. confecta est D<sup>na</sup> Ela Lungespe fundatrix in Abbatissam primam de Lacock, a<sup>o</sup> vero ætatis suæ liii. Ubi monasterium suum et gregem sibi commissum multis annis strenue gubernavit et Deo devotissime servivit, arctam vitam ducens, in jejuniis, in vigiliis, sanctis meditationibus, et disciplinis assidue rigidis, ac aliis operibus bonis caritativis, decem et octo annis. Demum vero, cernens se senio et nimia debilitate affectam, cum non potuit ut voluit religioni suæ prodesse, renunciavit et recusavit præesse, et dum vixit Abbatissam præfecit nomine Beatricem de Cantia, pridie kal. Januarii a<sup>o</sup> m.cc.l.vii., a<sup>o</sup> ætatis sui lxx. Sicque fere quinque annis post vixit sine omni cura libera; a<sup>o</sup> ætatis suæ lxxiv, ix kal. Septemb. animam suam in pace optinens, requievit in D<sup>no</sup> a<sup>o</sup> m.cc.lx.i. et in choro dicti monasterii decentissime tumulata.\*

From the foundation in 1232 until the foundress took the veil in 1238 gives the probable time that the principal buildings took to erect, and if not completed were at least made habitable. The appointment of Alice Garinges as first canoness<sup>b</sup> at the time of the foundation would imply that there were some inmates from the first who would be housed in temporary buildings.

Two original cartularies are preserved at the Abbey and contain the usual transcript of deeds relating to the possessions of the convent. Some of these will be referred to later.

Mr. Talbot, the present owner, has also in his possession a most interesting document, which is the only one known that directly refers to any of the building works. It is in the form of an agreement for the erection of the Lady Chapel in the fourteenth century, and will be quoted in its place.

Unfortunately no dissolution inventory or survey is known to exist, but the report of the Royal Commissioners, 28 Henry VIII., is as follows:

#### ABBEY OF LACOCK.

(A) A hedde house of nunnes of S. Augusteynes rule, of great and large buyldings, set in a towne. To the same and all other adjoynynge by common reaporte a great releef.

\* Bowles and Nichols, *Annals and Antiquities of Lacock Abbey* (London, 1835), appendix, iii. iv.

<sup>b</sup> *Prima canonissa* doubtless means a superior canoness and not the first of a number. It was probably always the intention of the foundress to enter the convent, and the post of abbess was unoccupied until such time as she might herself fill the office.

(Former valuation) £168 9s. 2d.; (present valuation) £194 9s. 2d., with £16 3s. 4d. for the demaynes of the same.

(B) (Religious) seventeen—viz., professed fourteen and novesses three, by report and in apparaunce of vertuous lyvyng, all desyring to continue religios.

(C) (Servants) forty-two—viz., chapleyns four; wayting servants three; officers of household nine; clerk and sexton two; women servants nine; and hyndes fifteen.

(D) Church, mansion and all oder houses in very good astate. The lead and bells there estemed to be solde to £100 10s.

(E) (Goods) £360 19s.—viz., jewells and plate £64 19s.; ornaments £17 12s.; stuff £21 18s. 2d.; and stokkes and stoores £257 0s. 10d.

(F) Owing by the house *nil*, and owing to the house *nil*.

(G) Great wood *nil*; copys woods 110 Acres. Estemed to be solde to £75 1s. 4d.<sup>a</sup>

In addition is a list of pensionaries and date of surrender, which was on the 21st January, 30 Henry VIII. (1538-9).<sup>b</sup>

On 16th June, 1540, the Abbey and its possessions were granted to Sir William Sharington on payment of £100, apparently a deposit of the £783 paid in all. He appears immediately to have commenced the conversion of the claustral buildings into a manor house. What he allowed to remain is in a wonderful state of preservation, never having been exposed to the ravages of the plunderer and the weather; but what he destroyed was done so completely that in places the very foundations are entirely obliterated.

### THE PRECINCT.

There is an interesting map on vellum in the possession of Mr. Talbot, "made for The Hon<sup>l</sup> John Talbot, Esq." in 1714, the same year in which he came into the property, and previously to the sweeping alterations he effected on the west side of the claustral buildings and in the arrangement of the grounds. The plan shows the extent of the abbey precinct, which occupied the almost level ground between the village and the river. Of the precinct wall nothing remains. The map shows many features now swept away which formed part of the monastic arrangements.

<sup>a</sup> P.R.O. Chantry Certificate No. 100, m. 2; *vide The Wilts Archaeological and Natural History Magazine*, xxviii. 310.

<sup>b</sup> *Ibid.* 315.

The precinct itself seems to have been an irregular oblong containing about eighteen acres. It was bounded on the south by the old road from London to Bath, on the east by the river Avon, on the north by fields, and on the west by two irregular areas. Of these the northern forms the churchyard and contains the parish church, and the southern the yard of the home farm of the abbey.

The principal buildings were of course those surrounding the cloister, situated towards the eastern end of the precinct, and afterwards incorporated in part in the present house. The infirmary occupied the space between this block and the river. The mill was to the north-east of the claustral block, a position necessitated by the course of the quick-flowing stream that then joined the river at a point eastward of the abbey. The mill was destroyed and the stream diverted shortly after the map was made, as it doubtless interfered with certain ornamental grounds then laid out.<sup>a</sup> The "Mill Way" on the map was probably not the original approach, as it would interfere with the quiet and seclusion necessary for the infirmary. Eastward of the mill were the fish ponds, which are shown in probably their unaltered state, and were supplied by the same stream that drove the mill.

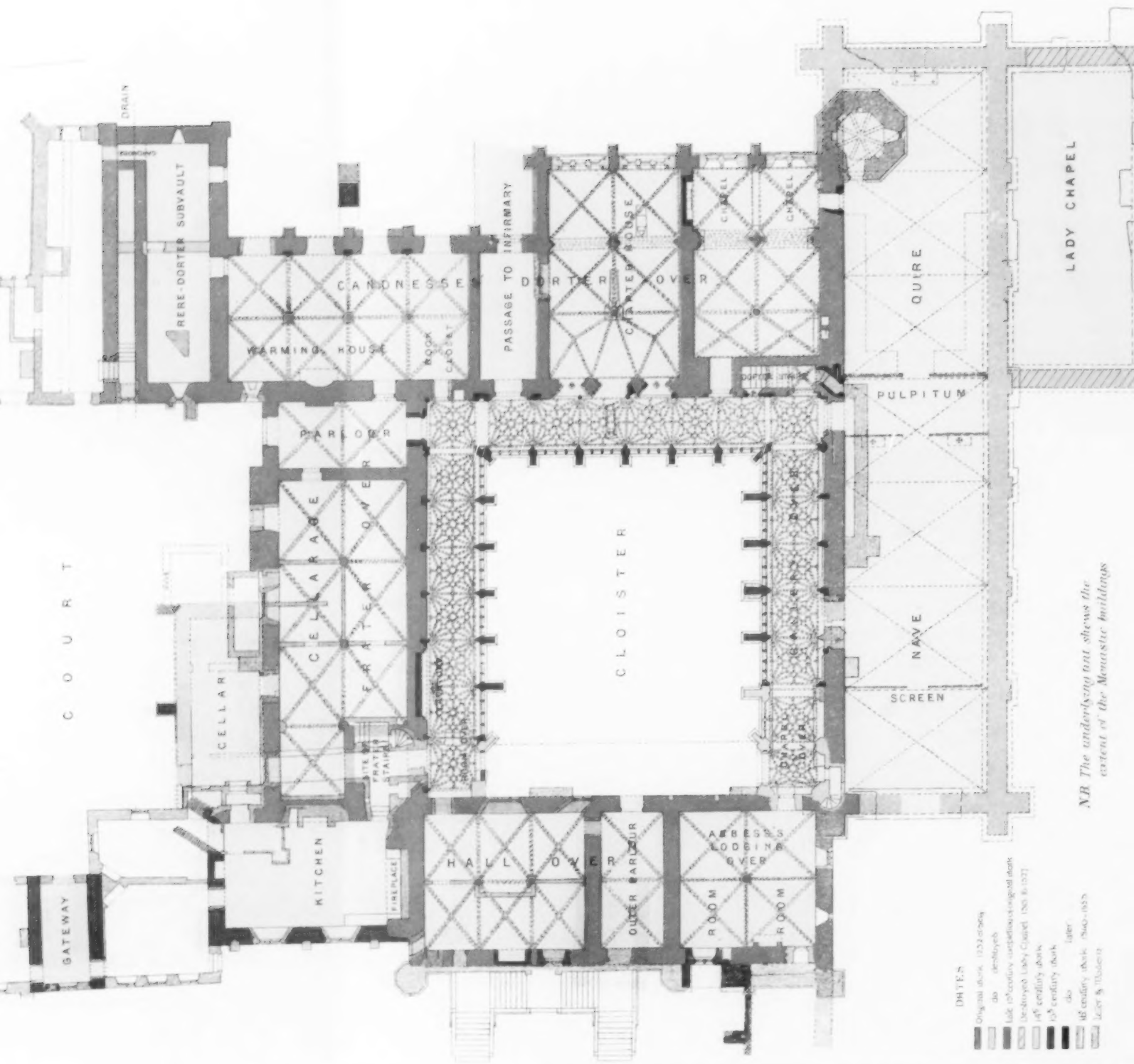
The outer court of the abbey was westward of the main block, and the buildings in connection with it have been entirely destroyed. Among other buildings it would contain the following, which are included in the suppression inventory of the sister house of Grace Dieu in Leicestershire, namely: "The Brew House, Yele House, Laundrye, Saulte House, Bake House, Kyle House, and Smythes forge,"<sup>b</sup> and would be entered on the west side through the main gatehouse.

The great drain of the abbey apparently commenced at the brook north of the parish church, and continued in a direct line to the rere-dorter and thence under part of the infirmary to the river. A portion of the water of the brook was intercepted and ran continuously through the drain to keep it clean. Where the drain is supposed to commence at the brook was a stone bridge to carry a pack-road over the stream. The southern arch remains and has

<sup>a</sup> These alterations are shown in a map dated 1764, belonging to Mr. Talbot.

<sup>b</sup> Most of these buildings were required in the new sixteenth century manor house, but as this monastic arrangement was doubtless inconvenient in situation, they were all rebuilt, and still exist round a large new court on the north side of the claustral buildings, forming one of the most interesting series of Tudor offices now extant.





N.B. The underlying tint shows the extent of the Monastic buildings

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a double chamfered outer arch with cross ribs in the soffit under the roadway.

Parts of the drain, of apparently fourteenth-century work, nearer the abbey have been found from time to time, and consisted of walled sides, with paved bottom, and covered with wide flag stones on the top.

The abbey buildings, judging from those still remaining, were constructed with rubble walls of hard stone and dressings of freestone. The hard stone is quarried in various places in the proximity; it is a forest marble found near the surface of the ground in thin beds, and is very tough, durable, and impossible to work. The freestone is of a good quality of Bath oolite. The earlier buildings were doubtless supplied from the quarry that "Henricus Crok dedit eisdem inter terram domini Sampsonis de la Boxe et Walteri Campedene, cum libero ingressu et egressu, quamdiu ipsa durare poterit," which was until 1241, when "Robertus Abbas de Stanlega in Wiltesire, et Conventus ejusdem loci, déderunt eisdem Monialibus unam partem quarrariæ suæ de Haselbyria, habentem in longitudine sexaginta et sexdecim pedes, et in latitudine quicquid eorum fuit, ad capiendam petram quantam inde capere poterant, in escambium illius quarrariæ quam Moniales emerunt de Henrico Crok. Dat. anno gratiæ m°.cc°. quadragesimo primo, die Sancti Johannis ante portam Latinam."<sup>a</sup>

The earlier quarry was probably also at Haslebury, as the Crooks were lords of that manor, so that the reason for the exchange with another in the same place is not clear.

These early quarries were tunnelled into the sides of the hills with surface adits, but are all worked out, and have given place to the stone mines of the present day, which are such a peculiar feature of the neighbourhood. In Aubrey's time, "*Haselbury Quarre* is not to be forgott; it is the eminentest free-stone quarrey in the West of England, Malmesbury and all round the country of it."<sup>b</sup>

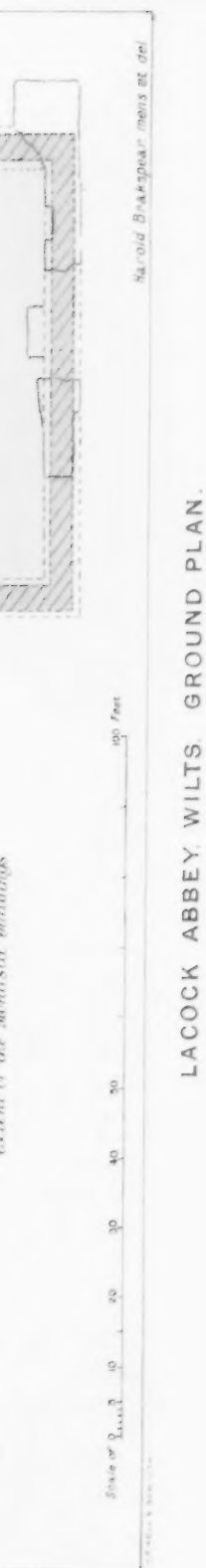
### THE CHURCH.

The church at Lacock occupied the south side of the cloister.

It was unfortunately one of those parts of the abbey deemed superfluous, and utterly destroyed by Sir William Sharington, with the exception of the six westernmost bays of the north wall. These were retained to form the south wall

<sup>a</sup> Lacock Cartulary, fol. 30 b.; see Bowles and Nichols, *op. cit.* appendix, xxii.

<sup>b</sup> Wiltshire. *The Topographical Collections of John Aubrey* (ed. J. E. Jackson, Devizes, 1862), 58.



of the new manor house, and so have remained to the present, though much mutilated by modern insertions of about 1828.<sup>a</sup>

Until November, 1898, the extent of the church was merely conjectural, but during that and the following month excavations were made on the site, with the help of donations from the Society of Antiquaries and the Wilts Archæological Society. The destruction had been so complete that the barest foundations were alone traceable, and in places even these were entirely removed. Although the investigation was not as satisfactory as was anticipated, the result was far from worthless, as it determined the length and width of the original building and the position of the added Lady Chapel.

The original church was an aisleless parallelogram, 143 feet long by 28 feet wide, divided into seven bays, without any structural division between the nave and choir. As the six remaining bays of the north wall exist to their full height, the original design of the side walls of the church is fortunately preserved. In each bay was a tall lancet window, except in the two covered by the eastern range. Internally the windows had continuous mouldings to the jambs and arches, with a hood-mould over the latter. Under the sills, 10 feet above the floor level, was a string-course with a wide band of ashlar beneath. Between the windows under the string-course were corbels carrying attached triple wall shafts, with moulded caps and bases, to support the vaulting. The springers and wall ribs of the vaulting were in stone; but judging from the slight abutment afforded by the wall, the rest was probably constructed in wood, like the contemporary work that remains at York and Rochester. All the projecting mouldings have been cut away in line with the wall, in all probability by Sharington. Externally the windows had double chamfered jambs and arch mouldings, with a label over the latter. Between each was a flat pilaster buttress, and at each angle of the building were double buttresses. The latter were surmounted above the eaves by octagonal turrets with spirelet tops, two at each angle, like those remaining at the west corner of the south aisle at Tintern. The top of the walls under the eaves were finished with a continuous corbel table, and at the base was a bold plinth of two orders of chamfers that continued round the buttresses.

The north-west angle of the church was built complete without any pro-

<sup>a</sup> These consist of: in the first bay from the west, a large oriel window; in the second, a buttress, a small oriel, and a doorway on the ground level; of the next two bays all above the string-course has been destroyed to form a projection containing a large oriel; in the fifth bay, a large sixteenth-century window, altered into a sash window in the eighteenth century; and in the sixth bay, a small two-light window.



vision being made for the junction of the western range. This is very little later in date, and has been built up against the church without any bond. The northern of the two buttresses was partly cut away, as it would have projected awkwardly into the southern room of the range. The western buttress still remains to its full height, divided into three stages by series of sets off. As late as 1732<sup>a</sup> the surmounting pinnacle remained complete, but its upper courses have since been removed. A small piece of the west wall of the church has been incorporated into a buttress at the suppression. The string-course externally under the sills of the side windows rises some 18 inches before crossing the west end, probably to escape the head of the western entrance. The plinth at this end had an additional member, consisting of a bold roll over the chamfers.

In the fourth bay from the west is the eastern doorway to the cloister. The arch is slightly pointed and formed of two members, with a label over, which was cut away when the present cloister was built. The outer member is moulded and rests on jamb shafts with moulded caps and bases; the inner is hollow chamfered and continued down the jambs. The rere-arch towards the church is segmental with a plain chamfer, and the string-course under the windows was returned over the top to form a label. The door was of two leaves and fastened by a draw bolt, the slot for which is in the west jamb.

Immediately to the east of the door is a small square-headed doorway leading by a passage through the wall to the foot of the dormitory stairs,<sup>b</sup> apparently inserted in the fifteenth century, and formed on the skew so as to escape the vaulting shaft in the church.<sup>c</sup> This alteration would enable the canonesses, when attending the night offices, to proceed direct from their beds to the church without passing through the cloister.<sup>d</sup>

In the second bay from the west was the western procession doorway, which has been much mutilated, but was apparently precisely similar to the eastern doorway.

There was another original doorway in the sixth bay that communicated with the vestry. The face next the church was removed in the fifteenth century, and a four-centred moulded arch inserted in its place.

<sup>a</sup> S. and N. Buck's engravings, 1732.

<sup>b</sup> This passage had to be built up solid a few years ago to prevent any further settlement to this corner of the building, which showed signs of failure.

<sup>c</sup> The door was fastened with a draw bar on the inside, the slot hole for which is lined with wood.

<sup>d</sup> At the sister house of Burnham, in Bucks, where the dormitory stairs were arranged in a similar position, there was never a night door to the church.

The first window from the west was blocked up towards the end of the fourteenth century by the erection of a building over the cloister, which will be described in its place. At the same time a vice or spiral staircase was inserted in the thickness of the wall of the north-west angle, with a small doorway at the bottom to the church.

Shortly after, the other three windows were blocked, in part at any rate, by the erection of a gallery over the rest of the south walk of the cloister. Before the suppression they were entirely blocked up, and five curious stone shoots, in the form of down pipes, were fixed to the upper part of the wall, presumably to carry off water from the roof, but as the hole of outlet is barely 1 inch in diameter they would not have been of much use. All except the easternmost have been destroyed, but their positions are indicated by the top stone of three others remaining.

The first alteration to the original church was the addition in the beginning of the fourteenth century of a large lady chapel on the south side of the presbytery. The remains of the foundations discovered by excavation were very scanty, and consisted of part of the east wall in line with the east wall of the church and part of the south wall. At the south-east angle was a large mass of foundations, which may have been for a turret. The western part of the south wall and the whole of the west wall were quite obliterated, so that it would be impossible to determine the length and character of the chapel, but for the very interesting building agreement above referred to. The text and translation have already been printed at length,\* but the part referring to the building itself is of such interest as to need no apology for repeating it:

Ceo est le covenant feat entre Dame Johanne de mounfort abbessse de lacoke e covent de mesme le lyu dune part E monsire sire Johan Bluet seigneur de lacham dautrepart Ceo est asavoir qe les avaundites abbessse e covent o lour successeres frount feare e parfeare une chapele de nostre Dame en lour abbeye de lacoke Quele chapele se joynt a lour haut Eglise de mesme labbeye E si serra La chapele de la longure de cynkaunte e neof pez e de la largesce de vynt e cynke e demi E serront en lavaundite chapele quatre fenestres Ceo est asavoir en chescun gable une fenestre si large com la une est feate e chevie e lautre com elle est comencee serra bien feat e finie e en Le forein costee de lavaundite chapele la une soit telle com elle est feat e chevie e lautre si large com elle est comencee serra feat e finie de bone overaigue e covenable E serront les avaundites fenestres covenablement ferrees e verrees E serra le veul mur abatuz de la poynte des deus fenestres qe furent e parerent le jour de la fesaunce de cest escript en le mur avaundit taunke a la renge table prochein

\* *The Wiltshire Archaeological and Natural History Magazine*, xvi. 350.

de sontz les bas de memes les fenestres E serront deus arches feates la ou le mur issi serra abatuz si large ceo est asavoir com bien e enseurement purra estre soeffers entre les deus rachemenz issi qe la veille voutre purra estre sawne sanz peril E frount les avaunt ditz abbesse e covent o lour successeres feare le comble de mesme la chapele de bon merym e convenable overaygue E de tel manere coumble commenz plerra al avaunt ditz abbesse e covent o lour successeres E serra lavaunt dite chapele ceo est asavoir le comble covert de plum bien e covenablement E serra le coumble de denz lavaunt dite chapele tot bien laumbresche e depeynt.

The rest of the agreement refers to the times of completion of the chapel, viz. within twelve years from the date of the writing, which was "Done a Lacoke le Jeody procheyn apres la feste seynt bartolomeu lan du regne le roi Edward filz au roi Edward neofyme," *i.e.* 1315.

It will be seen from the above that the manner of building this addition formed no exception to the usual mediæval system of almost completing the new work before any alteration was made to the original building. When the document was drawn up certain of the new windows were finished and the others were begun, but the older wall of the church was not interfered with. There were to be two arches of connection with the church in the old south wall, as large as could safely be constructed between the buttresses, and continued down only as far as the string-course under the windows and not to the ground,<sup>a</sup> the reason being that the canonesses' stalls would occupy the blank wall below the string-course, and by this arrangement their disturbance would not be necessary. As there were only two arches to be made, and the new chapel was equal in length to three bays of the original church, the eastern bay must have remained unaltered. This was possibly done for two reasons; the first, so that the new arches would have a good abutment, and the second, so that the sedilia and lockers in connection with the high altar, which would occupy this bay, would not be interfered with.

The new roof was to be well ceiled and painted; it would be parallel with that of the church and finished at the east and west ends with gables. In each gable was to be one window and in the south wall two windows, all well glazed and barred with iron. Between the two south windows and occupying the centre bay was probably the monument of Sir John Bluet,<sup>b</sup> which would be provided for

<sup>a</sup> The same arrangement of arches occurs across the transepts of the canons' church of Newark in Surrey, but formed part of the original design and were not insertions.

<sup>b</sup> In unblocking the east procession door there were found some small but very beautifully carved fragments of a monument of early fourteenth century work which may have belonged to this tomb.

from the first. A large block of foundation was found projecting into the chapel at this point and possibly formed its support.

There is one adjunct of the abbey church the position and character of which is yet unsettled, and that is the belfry. Besides the reference to bells in the commissioners' report already given, Aubrey says, "Here was a good ring of bells, which Sir . . . . Sharington sold, when he built Rea-bridge to divert the travelling by his house. The ringers took their leave of the bells of the Abbey, when they were to be taken down, which was on the 1st of May, A.D. . . . This country Rythme was made upon it:—

'On Philip and Jacob, the bells rung at Lacock,

The great bell went with such a surge, that he fell in at Rea-burge.'"<sup>a</sup>

The evidence that there were bells necessitates the existence of a belfry, and, as there is no structural evidence of its forming part of the original church, it is natural to suppose it was an addition. As there was "a good ring of bells" it is hardly likely to have been a wooden structure on the roof, but was probably a tower on the south side the church at the west end, where now unfortunately all the foundations are destroyed. Until further evidence comes to light any theory of its nature is mere conjecture.

As the north wall is the only piece of the church standing above ground all evidences respecting the internal arrangements are centred in this, and they are extremely scanty. Just to the right of the third vaulting-shaft from the east is a large hole in the wall, about eleven feet from the floor, which has been filled in with rough stone and tiles. This marks the end of the beam over the choir screen, which must have been constructed in wood and would have a door of entrance in the centre. Against the wall from this point to the vestry door would be the canonesses' stalls, and a similar series would be on the south side, with three against the screen on either side the choir door. Allowing the usual space for each seat there would be nine against each wall, and the six against the screen would make twenty-four seats in all.

In the centre would stand the monument of the foundress, who was *in choro decentissime tumulata*, and around it stood twenty-five candles lighted daily throughout the year.<sup>b</sup> Part of this monument is now placed in the floor of the

<sup>a</sup> Jackson's *Aubrey*, 90.

<sup>b</sup> "Et solut. annuatim pro xliij libris cere emptis pro manutencione xxv cerearum quolibet die per totum annum ardencium circa sepulturam domine Elie Longespe fundatricis monasterii de Lacok valoris cujuslibet ponderis communibus annis, vij d. Summa xxv s. viij d." *Valor Ecclesiasticus*, ii. 117.

south alley of the cloisters, where at one time it suffered severely from being walked over. It consists of a Purbeck marble slab with the matrix for a figure and canopy of brass in the centre, and round the margin was the following inscription in Lombardic characters cut in the stone, but now much obliterated:

INFRA . SVNT . DEFOSSA . E[LE . VENERABILIS] . OSSA . QVÆ . DEDIT . HAS  
SÆDÆS | SACRAS . [MONIALIBVS . ÆDÆS . ABBAT]ISSA | QVIDÆM . QVÆ . SANDTÆ .  
VIXIT . IBIDÆM . ET . COSRITISSA . SARVM . | VIRTVTVM . PLÆNA . BONARVM.\*

From the style of the canopy it would appear to be no older than the fourteenth century, so must have superseded some earlier memorial, from which apparently the inscription was exactly copied.

There was probably a small door in the south wall leading to the Lady chapel corresponding to that to the vestry.

Immediately to the east of these doors would be one or more steps across the church, known as *gradus presbyterii*, and at this point usually hung the veil during Lent. As this arrangement leaves only twenty feet for the presbytery proper, which is very short, the high altar must have stood against the east wall.

All evidence of internal fittings immediately west of the screen has been obliterated, but judging from other cases of oblong churches there would be a second screen across the church westward of the procession door with two small altars against its west side and a door in the centre.

Resting on the top of this and the eastern screen and occupying the full width between them would be the loft or gallery called the *pulpitum*.

Owing to the shortness of the nave it is doubtful whether there was a principal nave altar, as was invariably the case in large monastic churches. The normal position of the western door from the cloister was opposite the end of the west walk, so that processions passing round the cloister might go direct into the church and so take their station before the Rood. But at Lacock for some reason the doorway is some distance further east, perhaps because the westernmost bay of the church was filled by a gallery. The position and existence of the screen that carried this is shown by the east side of the quoins of the vaulting shaft being cut away in a perpendicular line to receive the end of the screen.

\* The bracketed parts are now illegible and are filled in on the authority of Bowles and Nichols, *op. cit.* 5. There is a space at the end of the inscription that may have contained the date, but it is now obliterated.



## THE CLOISTER.

The cloister court is about 80 feet square and was surrounded by covered alleys about 10 feet wide, with wooden pentice roofs, supported next the court on continuous open arcades. These arcades were originally formed by twin columns

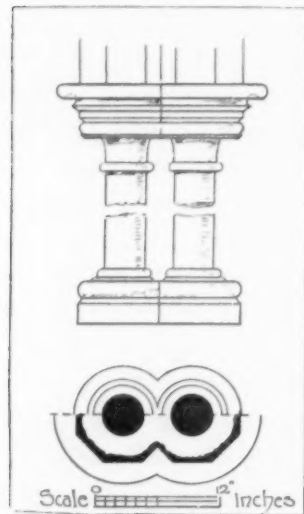


Fig. 1. Capitals and bases of original cloister.

with moulded caps and bases, all of Purbeck marble, carrying trefoiled headed arches and standing on a dwarf wall. All this work has been removed by subsequent rebuildings, but fragments have been found at various times from which the drawing (fig. 1) has been made to show the original arrangement.<sup>a</sup>

The first alteration to the cloister was apparently made in the middle of the fourteenth century when the west walk was rebuilt. It seems to have had a flat wooden roof divided into bays and resting against the main wall on stone corbels. One of these remains perfect in the north-west angle and represents an angel playing on a fiddle. The blocks for three other corbels remain towards the southern end, but have been cut off in line with the wall face. The wall next

the court was the same height as the later walls of the east and north alleys, and each bay was pierced by a large window, apparently square headed. Unfortunately this wall has subsequently been removed, except a small piece with the corner buttress at what was the north-west angle of the court in connection with the north wall. This buttress had a carved gargoyle over its top set-off, but this has been partly cut away. There is a small square-headed loop in the wall of the

<sup>a</sup> There is such a remarkable similarity of detail in cloisters of both the twelfth and thirteenth centuries as to lead to the supposition that they emanated from some central place. They are nearly always constructed in Purbeck marble, and considering the large number of abbeys being built at that period the demand at the quarries for this one sort of work must have been very great. To meet this demand it is almost certain the caps, bases, and columns were worked in large quantities and sent out in sets as the orders for the same were received. A parallel case is known to have existed in the fifteenth century with regard to alabaster images and carved panels. At first these were made at the quarries at Chellaston in Derbyshire, and later at Nottingham, by special "alablastermen," in great quantities and sent thence to all parts of the country and even abroad.—*Archaeologia*, lii. 679-680.







LACOCK ABBEY, WILTS. SOUTH-WEST ANGLE OF CLOISTER.



*C. F. Kell & Son, Photo-Print.*

LACOCK ABBEY, WILTS. WEST END OF SOUTH ALLEY OF CLOISTER.

north alley above the later window that is apparently of this work, though for what purpose it is impossible to say. It was evidently intended to rebuild the south alley in the same way as the west, and the wall of the first free bay beyond the west alley was set out and built as high as the seat. A change of design was then made, and this bay and the one forming the angle of the two walks were constructed with a stone vault, which necessitated a wider wall next the court. Instead of rebuilding the small portion of the one bay already begun from the foundations, the next course above the plinth externally has been corbelled out, and the piers to carry the vault internally are set out at the extreme edge of the seat. The vaulting is of a rich *lierne* type with carved bosses at the intersections, but the curves of the ribs being depressed segments give it an awkward appearance. The window towards the court of the free bay is of four lights with tracery of a curious transitional character (Plate XII.). These two bays are carried up to form an apartment over, which will be described later.

The rest of the south walk was proceeded with directly after the completion of the two western bays, but in a fully developed fifteenth-century style.\* Externally each bay has a four-light window, with tracery under a four-centred arched label, and divided from its neighbour by a boldly projecting buttress (Plate XII.) The windows seem never to have been glazed except in the tracery. The curves of the vaulting ribs follow those of the window arch, and each severy is divided into the same *lierne* pattern as the earlier bays. The vault is supported next the church wall on moulded piers projecting 18 inches from the wall line, which also carry wall arches that cut across the earlier openings without any attempt being made to work these into the later design.

The western procession doorway occurred where one of the wall piers should have been, and as it was necessary to retain the door for use, a narrow buttress was carried up each jamb of the original opening and supported a flat lintel from which the vaulting sprang abruptly. This arrangement has been almost entirely obliterated in recent times by continuing the vaulting downwards and forming a new pier beneath to match the others. In 1828 a new doorway was inserted in the church wall which has entirely destroyed the east jamb of the original door. Between the wall arches and under the windows towards the court are continuous stone seats. In houses of canons and monks the alley of the cloister

\* Although the style of the west bays and the rest of the south walk are so dissimilar, they were apparently built by the same masons, as the same marks occur on the stones in both sections of the work.

next the church usually contained the carells, which were little screened enclosures in which the religious studied, "every one in his carell, all the afternone until evensong tyme."<sup>a</sup> No such arrangement could have existed at Lacock; there being no holes or notches in the stonework such as would occur if the wooden partitions had ever existed. Over this alley was a low apartment which will be described later.

The rebuilding of the east walk of the cloister was proceeded with after the completion of the south walk<sup>b</sup> and in the same design, but being only one story in height, it has externally a bold cornice and parapet just above the window openings.

The new work is carried across the arches of entrance to the chapter-house in a very remarkable way; this can be best understood by reference to the ground plan (Plate XI.) and the view (Plate XIII.). Across the end of the alley in line with the outer wall of the north walk is a wide panelled arch, and in the jambs are niches for figures with richly carved canopies. The cause of this arrangement in design is evidently to throw the vaulting shafts as far southward as possible, so as not to interfere with the chapter-house arches more than necessary. The original tracery of the northernmost window has been destroyed, apparently to form a cartway into the cloister when the new hall was built in 1754, and has been replaced by tracery of that date copied from the old.

The north walk is of similar design, and the first five bays were set out of equal width to those of the east walk. At this point a difficulty seems to have arisen when it was found that the western clear bay would have been two feet wider than the rest. This was apparently intended to be overcome at first by having a wide pier and arch opposite the lavatory, similar to that at the north end of the east walk,<sup>c</sup> but a considerable change of design was made. In the first place the western walk was entirely done away with, and the plinth and wall above of the north walk continued up to the western range. The fifth bay was constructed two feet wider than the others, with the window openings widened proportionately. The angle bay was vaulted in the same way as the rest of the walk, and a small two-light window<sup>d</sup> placed in the continuation of the outer wall

<sup>a</sup> *Rites of Durham* (Surtees Society 15), 70, xli.

<sup>b</sup> There seems to have been a slight pause in the work, or possibly a change of masons, as no masons' marks occur on either this or the north alley.

<sup>c</sup> This is shown by the half-octagonal projection to carry the base of the vaulting shaft that remains under the seat.

<sup>d</sup> This has since been cut down and a doorway formed in its place.



C. F. Atoll & Son, Photo Print.

LACOCK ABBEY, WILTS. EAST ALLEY OF CLOISTER AND ENTRANCE TO CHAPTER-HOUSE.

*Published by the Society of Antiquaries of London, 1900.*







across the site of the west walk. There is a large block of masonry against the west range in the form of a buttress, against which this later work of the cloister abuts, and is carried as high as the string-course in continuation of the cloister cornice. Its use is not evident; as there is no sign of failure at this part of the western range it can scarcely have been built for a buttress, but it might possibly have contained the shaft of a garderobe in connection with the chamber above.

Over these two western bays has been added an upper chamber in late times, covered by a nearly flat wooden roof, with a ridge beam in the centre and simple stopped chamfered rafters on either side. Towards the cloister are two square-headed windows that have lost their original tracery. At the east end over the cloister roof is a two-light window with cusped heads. The whole is capped by a bold moulded cornice and a low parapet which on the east side follows the pitch of the roof. On either side the front windows the cornice returns downwards to form a label, and in the cornice between the windows are the remains of a boldly carved gargoyle. The room was apparently connected both with the frater and the hall in the western range, and may have been used as a pantry, or as the *camera* of an official.

In the north walk of the cloister immediately to the east of the frater door is the lavatory, which was originally contained within a large wall recess. This recess has a pointed segmental arch of two chamfered members, resting on short jambs with nook shafts having moulded caps and bases, the latter about 4 feet above the ground. When the new cloister was built in the fifteenth century the lavatory was considerably altered owing to the original arch being too high to be contained under the new vaulting. One of the vault springers comes nearly in the centre of the old arch and is carried on a corbel, instead of a wall shaft like the rest, carved as an angel holding a shield charged with a lion rampant, and divides the old arch into two nearly equal compartments. The old recess was built up to within 10 inches of the wall face and a projecting bason with richly panelled pedestal built in front. The bason and pedestal were destroyed after the suppression and the material used to wall up the shallow recesses. The eastern of these compartments has been opened out, and the other partially. About 3 feet above the bason level along the back is an ornamented cornice with *pateræ* in the hollow of the moulding. Some of these are shields bearing the sickle badge of the Hungerfords. Above the cornice are two moulded pedestals with shields on the face: the western one has the arms of Hungerford, *sable two bars argent and in chief three plates*; the other is *gules a sickle or*. On the plain wall above the cornice and occupying the whole recess is a painting. In the centre is the figure

of a bishop, probably St. Augustine, holding up his hand in benediction to a kneeling female figure to his right hand, apparently intended for the abbess, as she holds a crosier. On the left hand of the bishop is a conventional representation of a garden. Surrounding the painting is a quatrefoiled band in black and white. The background is red with a running pattern in gold and white.

The other compartment has not been sufficiently opened out to ascertain the subject. The central figure is apparently a woman who holds a crosier with a very beautiful crook.

### THE SACRISTY.

On the east side of the cloister and adjoining the church is an interesting apartment that has been for some time past designated "the sacristy." This was

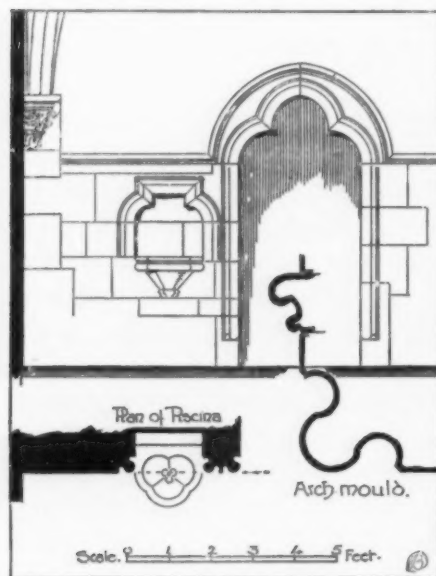


Fig. 2. Piscina and doorway in south wall of Sacristy.

possibly the use of the western part, but the east end contained two chapels. It is vaulted into two aisles of three bays each, supported in the centre by one large and one small pier. The large pier, with a respond against each side wall, carries two boldly-chamfered arches of two members transversely across the apartment to support the east wall of the dormitory above. The two eastern severies, which project beyond the line of the range, each contained a chapel originally divided from each other by a narrow wall. This wall was afterwards partially removed and an interment made on its line, the coffin of which still remains in place. It was probably covered by an altar tomb, with an arch over to carry the remaining part of the

\* In the blocking of the chapter-house arches were some fragments of a monument of this description of fourteenth-century date, and as the wall in which they must have stood was exactly the same thickness (viz. 14 inches) as the division wall of these chapels, it is reasonable to suppose the fragments formed part of this monument.

head and projecting trefoil bason. Directly to the west is a moulded trefoiled arch forming the back of the door from the church. The northern chapel had originally in the north wall a locker of two divisions with rebates for shutters; but this was destroyed in the fifteenth century, except the sill, and a moulded arched wall recess inserted, probably to hold another tomb. About the same time the chapel was decorated with colour, which still remains in places. There was a continuous band of interlacing lines round the wall arch. The field of the vault was profusely besprinkled with black five-rayed stars, and the flat chamfers of the large cross arch were decorated with an elegant design of scroll and leaf work.

The east windows are quite modern. In the last century, among other of Ivory Talbot's improvements, the east walls of this apartment and the chapter-house were entirely removed, leaving only the buttresses as support for the vaults, and no indication of any mediæval windows exist.\*

The large centre pier of the cross arches is formed by a cylinder with attached columns at the cardinal points, and has moulded caps and bases, and is supported on a wide plinth in the shape of a bench table. The responds are half octagons, each with a single attached column (towards the centre pier), which have moulded caps and bases, the abacus and plinth of which returns round the octagons; but there is no bench table beneath. The finished floor level at the sides must have been at least 18 inches higher than in the centre.

The west wall contained the dormitory stairs, and is therefore much thicker than the rest of this side of the range. Towards its north end is a doorway from the cloister, of two orders of chamfered members, the outer resting on jamb shafts (destroyed) with moulded caps and bases, and the inner continued down the jambs. It originally had a label which has been chopped away. The inner arch is segmental, and retains portions of its thirteenth-century "mason" decoration of yellow and white stones, alternating, with a dark joint line between.

In the south wall, towards the west end, is a double square-headed locker, rebated for shutters. There is a groove for a wooden shelf in each division.

The vaulting throughout the apartment has semi-octagonal ribs, and rests on richly carved corbels against the walls. The centre pier of the western portion of the apartment is octagonal with moulded cap and base. It is considerably later in date than the side walls, and shows that the vaulting, although provided for from the first, was not completed till sometime after. The junction between

\* The windows removed by Ivory Talbot were square-headed two-light windows of the sixteenth century, and are shown in the engraving by S. and N. Buck, already referred to.

the earlier springers and the rest of the ribs is marked in places by a slight difference in section.<sup>a</sup> As this centre pier is in the middle of the range, and in line with the vaulting piers of the chapter-house and warming-house, the extra thickness of the west wall of this apartment has caused the two western severies to be narrower from east to west than the eastern ones.

The floor westward of the cross arches has been lowered some six inches below its original level, but at what date is uncertain. As there is a rough step in front of the locker in the south wall, it was probably done in monastic times.

Some years ago a patch of thirteenth-century tiles, which had been apparently relaid at this lower level, was discovered, and afterwards taken up and placed in a wooden frame for their better preservation.

#### THE CHAPTER-HOUSE.

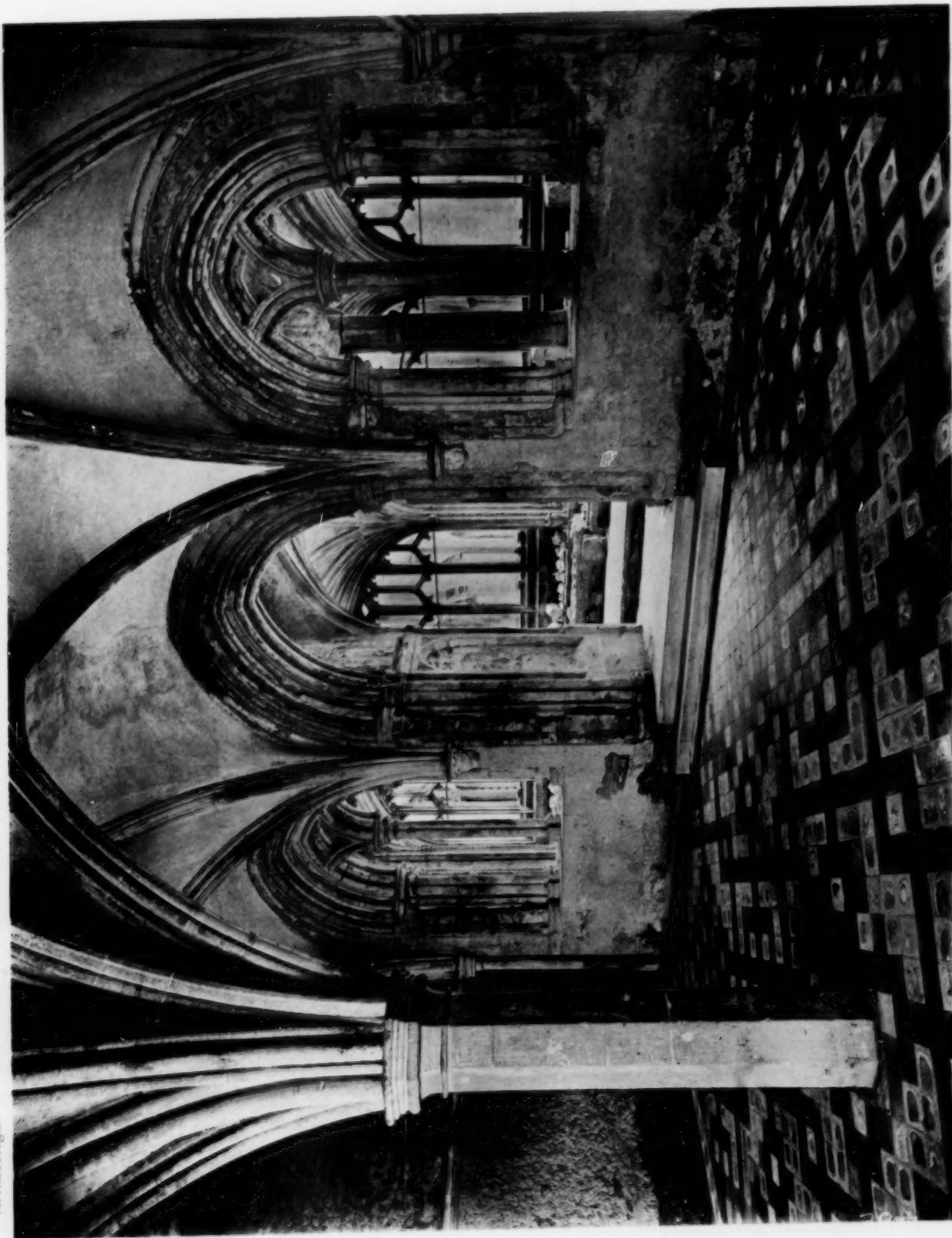
The chapter-house at Lacock is of nearly the same size as, and has centre columns arranged in a similar manner to, the sacristy. It is vaulted throughout with richly moulded ribs, and the cross arches carrying the wall above are also moulded. The centre pier under these arches is formed of a cluster of eight half-round columns attached to a drum, and has moulded caps and bases. The latter are 4 inches lower than the present floor, and show the original thirteenth-century level. The responds against the side walls are of the same plan as half the centre pier, and the abacus of the caps is continued along the walls as a string course. In each corner of the room are detached columns to carry the vaulting, and the other vaulting springers are supported on corbels. The bases of these angle columns are about 24 inches above the present floor level,<sup>b</sup> and originally rested on a stone seat that surrounded the room for the accommodation of the convent. The seat stood on a platform of one or two steps above the floor of the room. The

<sup>a</sup> I have to thank Mr. W. H. St. John Hope for pointing this out to me.

<sup>b</sup> These corner columns, as well as the responds under the cross arches, are completed down to the floor level and the bases chopped away. An alteration probably at the suppression, when the seats and platforms would be dispensed with on the conversion of this into a living room.







LACOCK ABBEY, WILTS. WEST END OF THE CHAPTER-HOUSE.

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blank wall between the east windows would be occupied by the president's seat, and the lectern would be immediately in front.<sup>a</sup>

The western central pier is similar to the corresponding one in the sacristy, the vaulting in this case also being later than the walls. This column must at one time have shown signs of failure, as it has been underpinned apparently in monastic times, and two large blocks of stone inserted in place of the moulded base, just beneath the line of the present floor.

The chapter-house was usually entered by the centre of three arches.<sup>b</sup> At Lacock these are of almost equal size, and are formed towards the cloister of four series of members. The outer is hollow chamfered and the inner ones richly moulded, resting on three detached columns in the jambs, with an attached triple shaft to carry the inner member. The side openings are stopped on a sill  $2\frac{1}{2}$  feet from the ground, and have in the centre of each a quadruple detached column higher than those in the jambs, and from which spring small arches of shorter radius than the main arches with which they intersect rather clumsily. All the columns have boldly moulded caps and bases. Towards the chapter-house is only one member, moulded, and supported on attached jamb shafts (see Plates XIII. and XIV.).

The side openings have had movable wooden shutters for about two-thirds their height, which fitted into notches cut in the bases and secured at the top by bolts, the holes for which remain in the columns.

The centre archway seems to have been fitted in later times with a wooden door about 6 feet high. In the fifteenth century, after the new cloister was built, a flat shelf 19 inches wide, now removed, was inserted at the springing of the arch, but what purpose it served it is impossible to say. At the same time the whole front next the cloister was decorated with colour.

On account of the eastern part of the chapter-house being divided into two aisles, and the west end into three compartments by the arches of entrance, an unusual treatment of vaulting was necessary. This is arranged by throwing a cross rib from the centre column to each jamb of the centre opening and dividing the irregular areas thus formed by diagonal ribs meeting each other in the centre (Plate XIV. and ground plan).

<sup>a</sup> At Waverley the stone pedestal on which the lectern stood is nearly 18 feet from the east wall and at Fountains 32 feet, but in these cases there was no central column, which at Lacock must have necessitated it being placed so far east.

<sup>b</sup> At Burnham the chapter-house has only one archway at the west end.

Usually the chapter-house and the cloister walk outside were favourite places of sepulchre for the heads of the house. At Fountains no less than nineteen out of the thirty-three abbots who ruled that house to the suppression were buried *in capitulo*.

At Lacock two coffins still remain under the floor inside the building and one just outside the entrance in the cloister walk. That in the centre was of later date than the raising of the floor level, and is only just covered by the present floor. All three coffins contained a few bones, but had been previously opened, and to whom they belonged it is impossible to say, as no record is extant of the place of sepulchre of any of the abbesses except the foundress.

Like the sacristy, the east windows are modern, but the segmental containing arch on the exterior is old and apparently of the original work.

Next the chapter-house is a pointed wagon vaulted passage with a continuous string-course at the springing.

It is entered from the cloister by a doorway of two members similar to that to the sacristy. At the east end was another doorway apparently similar to the western one, but it has been almost entirely destroyed by the insertion of a tall opening to match those into the warming house adjoining. The inner jamb on the south side is standing to its full height and the plinth of both jambs on the outside also remains. A portion of the south wall of the passage was removed in the sixteenth century and rebuilt to accommodate the back of a fireplace in the chapter-house. The string-course on the north side has been cut away for  $2\frac{1}{2}$  feet from the west wall for some fitting to be fixed there.

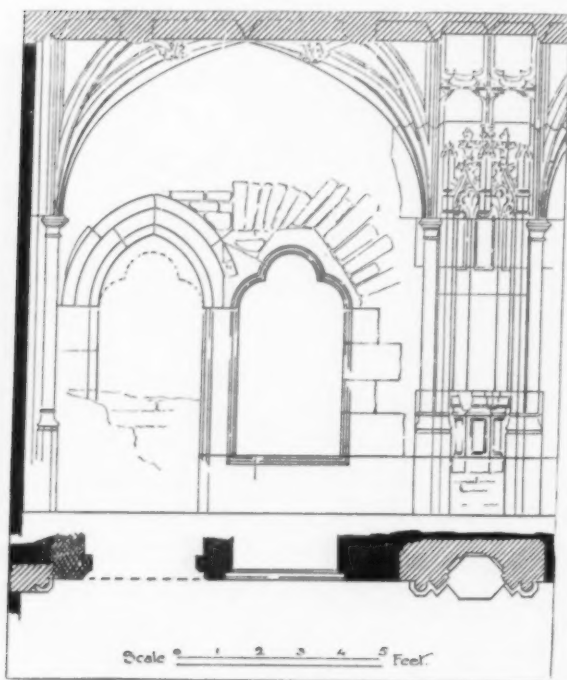


Fig. 3. Remains of book cupboards in the north-east corner of the cloister.

Outside in the north wall of the chapter-house where it projects beyond the range is a weathering for a pentice over the continuation of this passage, and

across the range wall and first buttress from the south is a diagonal cut in the masonry showing the pitch of the roof. How this passage was arranged beyond the east face of the chapter-house is impossible to say, as the north-east angle of the latter seems to have been refaced and all indications of an abutting building destroyed. There is little doubt, however, that it led eastward to the infirmary.\*

In the east wall of the cloister between the infirmary passage and the return wall of the north range were two trefoiled-headed recesses with sills 20 inches above the floor with rebates for doors. These would be used for the accommodation of books. In the fourteenth century the northern recess was cut down, the head altered to a pointed arch, and made into a doorway through the wall (see fig. 3).

#### THE WARMING HOUSE.

Northward of the infirmary passage was the warming or common house, where a fire was kept up all through the winter for the canonesses to warm themselves at. This was not entered directly from the cloister, as was usually the case, but from a passage under the east end of the frater, which will be described later. It is divided into two aisles of four bays each by three columns down the centre. The vaulting is of semi-octagonal ribs, and seems to have been completed at the same time as the side walls, against which it was supported on moulded and carved corbels. The central columns are cylindrical with moulded caps, and have been underpinned at an uncertain date and the bases renewed. The east wall has in the three southern bays wide pointed segmental rere-arches for the windows with hollow chamfers on the angle. The tracery was removed in the sixteenth century and small two-light square-headed windows inserted in the openings, except the second bay from the south, which was blocked by the sub-structure for a fireplace of that date.<sup>b</sup> These in turn were removed in the last century and the sills cut down to the ground. Each window recess had a double window seat on a step 18 inches from the ground and probably another step in front projecting into the room. Externally each bay is divided by a plain square buttress with two sets off in its height resting on a small chamfered plinth. The

\* At Burnham there was no structural passage through the eastern range to the infirmary, which occupied the same position as at Lacock, the only apparent access thereto from the cloisters being through the warming house.

<sup>b</sup> Shown on Buck's view already referred to.

original outer arches and the jambs of the windows remain. The northern bay differed from the others, but has been destroyed by the insertion of a modern arch to match the rest.

On the east side all the vaulting corbels except those in the angles have been removed, and three quarter-round columns with moulded caps and bases inserted

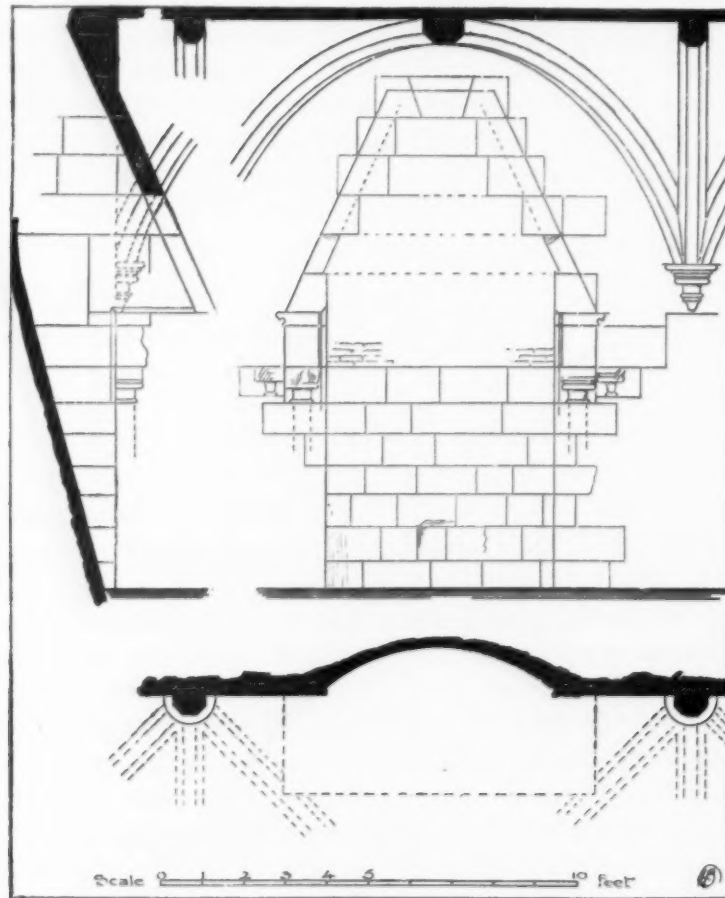


Fig. 4. Plan, section, and elevation of the warming house fireplace.

under the vaulting springers in the fifteenth century. At the same time a large flying buttress was built externally opposite the centre column, apparently to prevent an outward thrust of the vault, but its great size was more than necessary for this purpose alone, and it may have been intended to support a bridge from the

dorter to the upper part of the infirmary. The whole east side of the buttress has been cut away about  $2\frac{1}{2}$  feet in the sixteenth century.

The north wall has in its east bay a segmental-headed doorway, with plain chamfered jambs and arch, that lead to the sub-vault of the rere-dorter. The original floor-level immediately in front of it was considerably lower than the rest of the room. The west wall has in the first bay from the north a rere-arch of a window similar to, but smaller than, those in the east wall. The outside of the window has been destroyed and a square opening of uncertain date inserted. Both window seats remain perfect, but at a higher level than those in the opposite wall. The next bay is entirely occupied by a large hooded fireplace, with lamp-brackets on either side, but it has been much mutilated (fig. 4). The next bay southward contains the segmental rere-arch of the entrance doorway, which on the other side is a plain segmental arch of two chamfered orders, unlike any other remaining in the buildings. In the southern bay must be the back of the doorway inserted in the book recess, but is now covered with plaster.

The south wall is blank, but the vaulting corbel in the centre has been cut away. All the walls at present are covered with a thick coat of plaster which effectually covers any evidence of original arrangements. The southern bay was probably partitioned off to form a more commodious book-closet in the fourteenth century, when the door from the cloister was inserted in the northernmost of the old book cupboards.

#### THE DORMITORIUM OR DORTER.\*

Occupying the whole of the upper floor of the eastern range, over the vestry, chapter-house, and warming-house, was the great *dormitorium* or dorter of the canonesses. It was approached by a flight of steps contained in the thickness of the west wall of the vestry, but the lower steps were destroyed and the upper part of the staircase walled up solid after the suppression. At the foot of the staircase is a small square lobby vaulted with semi-octagonal ribs, and entered from the cloister by a segmental headed doorway of two chamfered members, the outer resting on jamb shafts with moulded caps and bases. The door was fastened on the inside with a draw bar.

The staircase is covered by a wagon vault with cross ribs at intervals. It was lighted under the original pentice cloister by a window formed of two pointed

\* The Old English word "dorter," meaning a sleeping place, occurs in the form of "dortore" before the end of the thirteenth century. It is derived from the Old French *dortoir*, which in turn comes from the Latin *dormitorium*. See *A New English Dictionary*, iii. 607, s.v. *Dortour*, *Dorter*.



arches resting on detached columns with moulded caps and bases,<sup>a</sup> and above the cloister roof by a small trefoil window now blocked up. Against the east side was a wooden handrail; the plug holes for its fixing to the wall still remain.

The side walls of the dorter were pierced by small lancet windows; the south jamb and sill of the southernmost towards the cloister still remains. Above it are the remains of a hollow moulded blocking course that ran under the eaves of the original roof. Portions of a similar blocking course remain in the upper part of the east walls of the vestry and chapter-house, and show that the projecting part of these chambers originally had an upper story, probably in connection with the dorter.<sup>b</sup>

Late in the fourteenth century considerable alterations were made to the dorter. The north end was lengthened some 22 feet across the rere-dorter and its drain, and a new gable built above the north wall of the latter, in which are the jambs and arch of a large window now built up. The side walls were raised 2½ feet, and a new roof put on. The roof still remains, though mutilated by later alterations, and is divided into fourteen bays by framed tie-beam principals supporting two purlins on each side, with two arched and feathered wind-braces in each division. All the main timbers and the wind-braces are wrought, and have hollow chamfered angles.

After the suppression a long gallery was constructed in the roof over the tie beams. The collar beams of the principals were all removed, and the lower purlins and wind braces in the second, sixth, eighth, tenth, and twelfth bays on the east side, and the fourth and thirteenth bays on the west were taken out to form large dormer windows to light the gallery. The external walls were practically removed by the insertion of large windows and fireplaces (see Plate XV.).

All evidence of monastic arrangement internally is covered up by plastering and wainscoting. There would doubtless be a centre passage lighted by the large window in the north gable.

Opening off the centre passage on either side were the cubicles of the canonesses and novices.

<sup>a</sup> As the head of this opening was above the level of the vaulting of the fifteenth-century cloister, the whole was refaced at that time by a smaller two-light window with cusped heads, protected with cross-bars but not glazed, and still retains traces of colour decoration.

<sup>b</sup> At Burnham the dorter was of one width throughout, the chapter-house alone projecting beyond the range and the projecting part being covered by a lean-to roof. At the small Cistercian house of Calder was a similar arrangement over the projecting part of the chapter-house as at Lacock, covered by a roof parallel to the dorter roof.







C. P. Kelly & Son, Photo Print

LACOCK ABBEY, WILTS. FROM THE NORTH-EAST.

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## THE NECESSARIUM OR RERE-DORTER.

At the north end of the eastern range is a large two-storied building with its axis east and west. The upper floor, on the same level as the dorter, was the *dormitorii necessaria* or rere-dorter of the convent (Plate XV.).

The lower story consists of a long wagon vaulted chamber to the south occupying about two-thirds the width of the building, the other third contains the pit of the garderobes, through which ran the main drain of the abbey. The chamber is entered by a segmental headed doorway from the warming-house, and by another doorway in the same wall further east from the court between the eastern range and the infirmary. At either end was a tall square-headed loop 9 $\frac{3}{4}$  feet high and 7 $\frac{1}{2}$  inches wide. The western one has been partly destroyed in the sixteenth century by the insertion of a shorter and wider window in the lower part and the upper part walled up. The inside sill appears to have had window seats similar to the warming-house. The eastern loop\* is perfect and the sill had no window seats. Over the drain in the north-east corner was a garderobe within a segmental headed recess. The chamber is now divided into two parts by a cross wall, erected to carry the east wall of the extended dorter above, and there is a plain arched doorway in its north end.

The external angles of the building have flat pilaster buttresses. What use this basement was put to is most uncertain, but part probably was a store for fuel to supply the warming-house fire.

The rere-dorter would originally have been entered by a doorway in its south wall at the end of the centre passage of the dorter, and the whole north wall would have been occupied by garderobes over the drain.

In the fourteenth century the dorter, as before described, was continued northward, incorporating the western part of the rere-dorter, thus cutting off more than half the accommodation it formerly contained. It is difficult to say if this reduced number of garderobes was sufficient for the use of the convent, or whether a new rere-dorter was erected further north.

\* At one time a transom has been inserted in this at half height but subsequently removed.

## THE INFIRMARY.

The infirmary was a complete block of buildings detached from those surrounding the cloister except by a covered passage or pentice. As its name implies it was for the accommodation of the aged or infirm religious who were physically unable to live the strict life of the cloister.

At Lacock the infirmary was situated to the east of the claustral buildings, and was approached therefrom through the passage next the chapter-house already described. The whole block was completely destroyed at the suppression and the site has not yet been excavated. In cutting a drain in 1896 sundry walls were uncovered, but these, until further followed, were not sufficient to tell of the arrangement. Probably it would not be unlike that of the sister house at Burnham, which consisted of a large hall placed north and south, with a small rere-dorter at the north end and presumably a chapel and kitchen eastward.

The care of the sick and ordering of the infirmary was under the care of an officer in accordance with the rule: "*Egrotantium cura sine post egritudinem reficiendorum sine aliqua imbecillitate eciam sine febribus laborantium, uni alicui debet iniungi, ut ipse de cellario petat quod cuique opus esse prospexerit,*" but in cases of severe illness a physician had to be called in.

THE REFECTORIUM OR FRATER.<sup>a</sup>

The *refectory*, *frater*, or dining hall of the convent, occupies the whole of the north side of the cloister over a subvault.

The basement is divided into two parts by a cross wall towards its eastern end. The eastern part forms a passage vaulted into two severies with plain semi-octagonal ribs resting on moulded corbels. Originally it was entered from the cloister by a wide pointed segmental arched doorway of two chamfered orders, with nook shafts in the jambs similar to the other doorways. In the fifteenth century, when the new cloister was built, the west

<sup>a</sup> The Old English word "*frater*," meaning a dining-hall, is at least as old as the thirteenth century. It has nothing to do with *frater*, a brother; but is derived from the Old French *fraitur*, a shortened form of *refreitor*, which comes from the Middle Latin *refectorium*. See *A New English Dictionary*, iv. 515, s.v. *Frater*. The modern word "*refectory*" was apparently never used before the suppression.

jamb was destroyed and a smaller doorway, with a moulded four centred arch, inserted in the older opening. The east jamb remains, although walled up, and retains traces of its original coloured "mason" decoration. The north end of the passage had a wide pointed segmental arched doorway of a single chamfered order which has been much mutilated by later insertions, now removed. On the east side, in the first bay from the south, is the original entrance to the warming-house already described, and in the other bay is a wide buttress-like projection forming the back of the warming-house fireplace. Opposite this in the west wall is a shouldered doorway that led to the western division of the basement. This passage was probably used as the inner parlour, where any necessary talking was allowed between the inmates.

The western division of the basement is a low vaulted cellar divided into two aisles, four bays in length, and supported in the centre on plain octagonal pillars without caps, and against the walls on moulded corbels. There was apparently no direct means of access to this cellar from the cloister. All the original features of the north wall are obliterated by modern casing externally and plaster internally. The western severy of the south alley was occupied by the staircase leading up from the cloister to the frater, the original arrangement of which has been entirely obliterated. The door from the cloister to this staircase was of two members similar to that to the infirmary passage already described. It was considerably encroached upon in the fifteenth century by the new cloister, and since the suppression the western jamb and arch has been destroyed by the insertion of a passage leading to the kitchen and cellar.

The frater itself was a large hall with open timber roof, 79 feet long by 27 feet wide, but after the suppression it was divided up into rooms and passages, so that all indications of its monastic arrangements are lost. It would have at the east end a raised dais, upon which was the high table of the president, and along the side walls would be seats and tables for the convent. At some 15 feet from the west wall would be the screens dividing off the staircase of approach and the buttery, and above would be a loft or gallery. Evidence of the existence of this gallery is yet shown by the western part being of two stories and the eastern part only one.

On the north side externally is a bold projection originally containing the pulpit for the use of the reader at table, who during dinner and supper, but not collation, read passages from the Scriptures, in accordance with the rule of the Order: "*Nec sole vobis fauces sumant cibum sed et aures esuriant Dei*



verbum." The archway and entrance to the pulpit still remains, and has continuous moulded jambs and arch, with a label over the latter. Inside the west jamb are the remains of the niche for the books for the use of the reader, and it was the duty of the librarian to see it was supplied with the necessary books ordered to be read at the different seasons of the year.\* The steps and pulpit itself were destroyed after the suppression by the insertion of a large fireplace.

Externally the whole of the north wall of the frater has been recased and all old features obliterated, but on the south side over the cloister roof are some remains of mediæval work. These consist of part of the outer rings of two circular windows of different sizes. The walls were raised in the fifteenth century, like the dorter, when the small circular windows, which were apparently the original ones, were superseded by the larger ones. Although the remains exist of only one of these larger windows, there were evidently four towards the cloister, one in each alternate bay. The places where the other three windows would occur are occupied by a later window, a door, and the late mediæval building over the west end of the cloister.

The roof of fifteenth-century date still remains almost perfect, and is divided into eight bays by framed arched principals, and each alternate couple has a cambered tie-beam. On each side are two purlins, supported by curved wind-braces. The principal timbers are richly moulded. The centre common rafter of each bay is larger than the others, and is moulded and mitred with the purlins. The junction with the walls is covered by a deep moulded cornice. The main couples, with the tie-beams, rested on stone corbels, and the intermediate ones on wood corbels. One of each kind remains on the south side at the west end. The stone corbel is carved to represent a crowned male head and the wooden one an angel with closed wings.

#### THE WESTERN RANGE.

The west side of the cloister is covered by a range of buildings, of which the original ground story remains intact. The upper parts were destroyed by the erection of the present hall and dining-room in 1754, except a small piece at the south end which exists to its full height. The ground story is divided into three

\* J. W. Clark, *The Observances in use at the Priory of Barnwell* (Cambridge, 1897), 66.

unequal sized apartments, and is a little subsequent in date to the church, against which it abuts without any bond, although it formed part of the original plan.

The southernmost apartment is 25 feet square, and vaulted into four severies. This, like the vaulting of the eastern range, is later in date than the side walls. It is supported in the centre on a low circular column with moulded cap and base, and against the walls on moulded corbels. In the west wall in the southern bay is a pointed and chamfered arched doorway, close against the south wall, leading outwards from the apartment. It was apparently inserted in the fourteenth century. Next to this northward is an original fireplace; it had a hood carried on corbels and projecting jambs, but has been much mutilated. Just to the north of this, but in the next bay, is a tall and narrow opening in the wall, four feet above the floor level. It has a segmental head, and apparently formed the entrance to a vice. Immediately beneath, a small square fireplace with curbed hearthstone was inserted in the fifteenth century, and the flue carried up the opening. Occupying the centre of this bay is a square-headed two-light window with a segmental rere-arch inserted in the fifteenth century. This superseded a shoulder-headed doorway opening from the apartment, and of which the north jamb and one shoulder still remain close against the north wall.

The north wall is blank, but had some fittings fixed against its eastern bay. The western bay retains its original plastering, on which are two sketches of different dates. The earlier, which cannot be much later than the thirteenth century, is in red lines, and represents a half-length figure of St. Christopher carrying the infant Saviour in his arms. The other is later, and not so well executed, is in blue lines, and represents St. Andrew with his arms extended in the form of the cross that bears his name.

The east wall is blank, except for a pointed-headed doorway opposite the south walk of the cloister, and inserted when the two western bays of the south walk were built in the fourteenth century.

The south wall has in each bay a window; the western one is the original lancet with segmental rere-arch, the other was enlarged at an uncertain date into a plain two-light square-headed window, but the rere-arch and one inside jamb of the original work was retained.

The chamber was divided by wooden partitions into separate rooms; the two western severies were apparently living rooms with a fireplace in each, and the two eastern severies would form a passage thereto from the door to the cloisters, with probably a store place at the north end. The use of these chambers is uncertain, but I am inclined to attribute them to the chaplains, of whom there were

three and a father confessor.<sup>a</sup> There were other buildings to the west, now destroyed, which contained two chambers, that were probably used for the same purpose. These destroyed buildings will be referred to later.

The next chamber to the north, in the range, formed a passage and is vaulted in two severies resting on moulded corbels. There is a segmental arched doorway at the east end leading to the cloister, and another doorway at the west end, covered up externally by the modern work of the hall. As this passage formed the cloister entry from the outer court it was doubtless used as the outer parlour. The western doorway is placed considerably out of centre, apparently to allow sitting room to one side of it for the porter who kept the door, so as to be out of the direct way of those passing in and out.

The northernmost chamber of the range is vaulted into six severies, resting in the centre on circular columns and against the walls on moulded corbels, similar to the other apartments. The west wall contains in the first bay from the north an original shouldered doorway leading outwards. In the second bay was originally a small window; this was destroyed in the fifteenth century by the insertion of a large fireplace, with flat arched head under a square outer moulding. The spandrels are carved with delicate foliage bearing the letters E and M, the initials of Elena de Montfort, who is mentioned as abbess in 1421 and 1426.<sup>b</sup> The southern bay appears to have had a small window enlarged in the fifteenth century to make it similar to that in the southern apartment. The whole external face of this wall is covered by the casing of the present hall. The end walls of the chamber are blank, excepting for a modern inserted door and window in the south and north ends respectively. The wall next the cloister has been so mutilated by modern insertions in the shape of two windows and a door as to entirely obliterate any original openings if such existed. It is difficult to ascribe a use to this room, but it is not unlikely it was for the accommodation of inferior guests under the care of the cellaress.

To revert to the destroyed buildings to the west but adjoining the range. All that is at present extant in connection with them is, outside the two-light window in the southern chamber, a curious skew-arch with boldly moulded plinth to the south and indications of it to the north. Above are the remains of what appears to be the moulded jamb of a window. Where the plinth stops to the south against a modern buttress are the foundations of a wall running westward

<sup>a</sup> *Valor Ecclesiasticus*, ii. 115-118.

<sup>b</sup> *The Wiltshire Archaeological and Natural History Magazine*, xxvi. 44.

with a buttress on its north side. The reason for the arch over the window being of so curious a form is difficult to account for; but it probably was done to allow a flight of stairs to pass over the top in the thickness of the wall. These stairs would lead from the court to the destroyed buildings and supersede the original vice leading from the south chamber of the range already described.

On the old map are shown at the south-west angle two projecting apartments, and at the north end of the range another projection containing the entrance and stairs to the hall. Dingley's\* almost contemporary sketch shows further the nature of these buildings, which appear to have been remodelled in the sixteenth century, but it is highly probable the walls were monastic, as they occur in a suitable position with respect to the doors from the range.

#### THE ABBESS'S LODGING.

As before mentioned, there is an inserted vice in the north-west angle of the church, with doors at the bottom to the church and cloister, and communicating with rooms on the first floor of the western range. As the accommodation of a private stair to the church and cloister would only be required by the head of the house, the rooms over the western range may safely be ascribed to the abbess, that is, after the fourteenth century, and these were apparently disposed in two main divisions as at present.

The northern part, occupying the space over the inferior guest hall and outer parlour on the first floor, was, as at present, the hall.

"The halle" is a chamber invariably mentioned in all inventories of houses of this order, and was used probably for the accommodation of superior guests entertained by the abbess herself.

The hall with sundry alterations seems to have lasted until superseded by the present one in the last century. It was then entered at its north end through a porch, on the ground level, and steps, and had in the west wall three tall windows. The north end would be partitioned off by a screen and was connected by a doorway to the kitchen, through which the food was served.

A large piece of richly crested cornice of fifteenth century work, now used up over the present front door, presumably came from the old fireplace.

The southern division was of two stories in height above the subvault, and

\* *History from Marble* (Camden Society 97), ii. ccccciii.

divided into rooms for the private use of the abbess, but all internal arrangements were swept away when the present dining-room was built.

The east and part of the south walls still remain to their full height. The former retains the weathering of the pentice cloister roof, just above which is a square window with moulded jambs, but plain splayed head and sill of late thirteenth-century work, and over the raised south walk of the cloister is a square window now blocked, but apparently of two lights and fifteenth-century in date. The latter retains the sills of two narrow windows of the top story.

Over the two western bays of the south alley of the cloister, as before mentioned, is an apartment that formed the private chapel of the abbess. It had in each bay towards the court a square-headed window, divided into two lights, with tracery in the head. The tracery and mullions were destroyed and the windows walled up in the last century, but the western one was unblocked two years ago, when fragments of the tracery were found sufficient to show the original design. So late as 1684 one of these windows retained its original stained glass, thus described by Dingley.\*

"In the Passage leading out of the Great Dineing Roome towards the matted and Stone-Galleries painted in the Glass you find the figure in highest place of an Angell holding a flying scroll with *abe grā plena*: under w<sup>ch</sup> the Remaines of a Saynt Christoph<sup>r</sup> who carrieth a CHRIST upon his shoulders . holding in his left hand a Globe of the world. Adjoining to this in y<sup>e</sup> next part of the window is some saynt who had been a Bishop, with a Glory about his head and miter not much unlike this, hold up his Right hand and two fingers erect in a posture of pron<sup>u</sup>ncing Benediction to the Nunns of this Abbey passing by. On the Right hand in y<sup>e</sup> same Window of this Representa<sup>o</sup>n of Saint Austin was another Bishop Represented w<sup>th</sup> his pastoral staff. Over both w<sup>ch</sup> in the same Glass is seen a St. Bartholnew w<sup>th</sup> his Knife in his hand."

The other "Bishop" Dingley did not identify was probably St. Bernard, in whose honour the abbey was jointly dedicated with the Blessed Virgin Mary.

The internal arrangements of this chapel have long since been obliterated. As the vice communicating with the church enters at the south-west corner the western part would be divided off by a screen, so that when the staircase was being used it would not be necessary to pass through the chapel. The top of the newel of the vice is carved into a spirited grotesque swallowing the end of the newel.

Over the rest of the south alley of the cloister was a low passage between the

\* *History from Marble* (Camden Society 97), ii. cccciv.



chapel and the dorter, lighted by small, square, two-light windows with cusped heads over each bay of the cloister. The second, fourth, and sixth from the east have been destroyed by the insertion of larger windows, but one of the heads was found perfect in the blocking of the east procession door.\* The first, third, and fifth were walled up so as to carefully conceal their existence. These alterations were effected in the sixteenth century; at the same time the gallery was raised about 5 feet. The passage was used by the abbess in passing from the dorter to her lodging after solemnly commending the convent to the care of the Almighty before they retired to their beds. In the early days of all monastic orders the superior had to sleep in dorter with the convent, so that it is easily understood why there was no separate accommodation for the abbess at Lacock till the end of the fourteenth century.

#### THE KITCHEN.

At the west end of the frater in continuation northward of the western range was and is still the kitchen, an apartment that for over 660 years has been used for the same purpose. At present it is an oblong room open to the roof 33 feet long by 21 feet wide, but originally the west wall was apparently in line with that of the western range.

In the south wall is a large original fire-place 14 feet wide, with a broad chamfered segmental arch that has been much cut about in later times and now partially walled up. On a level with the first floor of the western range at the east end of this wall is the jamb of a doorway leading to the abbess's hall.

In the east wall beyond the north wall of the frater is one internal jamb and part of the rere-arch of an original doorway.

The present west wall is plastered inside and out, and the windows are of the last century, so that it is impossible to definitely attribute a date.

The present roof is apparently fifteenth century, but it is quite plain with framed couples with cambered tie-beams, and in the north gable high up is a two-light wooden window now blocked up.

Other monastic features are now obliterated or covered up with later alterations or plaster. There was apparently a gallery along the east side as at present,

\* These windows had rebates for shutters as well as grooves for glass.

approached by wooden steps, up which the food would be taken to the frater and served through a hatch in its west wall, and to the abbess's hall through the doorway already mentioned.

In connection with the kitchen should be mentioned the fine cauldron now placed on a pedestal as an object in the grounds. It is a vast bell-metal pot,  $2\frac{3}{4}$  feet in diameter, and standing 3 feet high, supported on three legs, and with handles ornamented with "long-beards." It originally had in addition rings in the handles which are now lost. Round the widest part of the bowl is the inscription :

\* A PETRO VVAGHEVENS IN MECHLINIA EFFVSVS FACTVS VE PVERAM ANNO DOMINI MILLESIMO  
QUINGENTESIMO DEO LAVS ET GLORIA CRISTO.\*

Against the north side of the frater was a narrow building of uncertain date, in connection with the kitchen, and probably used as a larder or extra cellarage. It was unfortunately pulled down in 1827, owing to the obstruction of windows to the rooms in the frater, and was afterwards said to have been "a building of no interest." It was of two stories in height, and had two buttresses on the north side. In mediæval times it was probably only a one-storied building, or otherwise it would have obstructed the windows of the frater. The foundations still exist and show that the north wall had a plain plinth, and the buttresses were added in the fifteenth century. The plinth of the latter is formed of a fourteenth-century cornice-mould set upside down and the projecting outer member cut off.

Northward of the kitchen are the remains of a late fifteenth-century gateway, originally opening from the outer court into the kitchen court. It is placed east and west; the west end has a segmental moulded-arch, and the upper part of the east end was carried on a wooden beam. The upper chamber has been entirely remodelled, but is shown in Dingley's sketch with a gable to the east and west, and a small pointed window over the west arch.

In conclusion I wish to express my indebtedness to Mr. C. H. Talbot and Mr. W. H. St. John Hope for much valuable information and assistance rendered in compiling these notes.

